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AUTHOR Nelson, Murry R.; Singleton, H. Wells
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ABSTRACT

Governmental interference with academic freedom is illustrated by F.B.I. surveillance of and unauthorized distribution of information about progressive educators John Dewey, George Counts, and Harold Rugg. These three educators attracted the attention of governmental agencies and special interest groups during the 1930s and 1940s because they advocated educational reform and participated in liberal movements such as the ACLU and the NAACP. All three were suspected of communist leanings because they departed from traditional educational approaches and urged students and community members to become actively involved in social reconstruction. In their educational writings and in their courses at Columbia University and the University of Chicago, these educators introduced students to controversial issues such as the depression, labor-management relations, the distribution of wealth, and lifestyles in socialist countries. By 1941, the F.B.I. had gathered nearly 400 pages of information on the three progressive educators in the form of reports by private and governmental agencies, letters, articles, and clippings. The F.B.I. method of accumulating data was to collect any type of readily available information about the men, put the information in a file, and add to the file in a random manner from time to time. This investigative process, apparently without clear objective, made use of much false, partially true, and unsubstantiated information. The conclusion is that the F.B.I. investigations into the activities and writings of Dewey, Rugg, and Counts were capricious, unmethodical, unconfidential, and deleterious to freedom of speech. (Author/DB)

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Governmental Surveillance Of Three Progressive Educators

Murry R. Nelson
Assistant Professor of Education
The Pennsylvania State University

and

H. Wells Singleton
Assistant Professor of Education
University of Toledo

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FBI Surveillance of Three

Progressive Educators

Recent inquiries into covert activities of the several intelligence agencies of this nation have revealed the existence of detailed files on various individuals and groups in the United States. According to the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence Activities, Chaired by Senator Church, "The covert relationships with the C.I.A. (and F.B.I.), 'range from academics making introductions for intelligence purposes. . .to academic research and writing where C.I.A. (and F.B.I.) sponsorship is hidden.'" (Winkler, P. 1) The areas of surveillance and influence were as broad as the relationships themselves. Agriculture, education, physics, politics, mathematics, et.al. were just a few of the areas deemed worthy of close scrutiny.

Prior to the revelations of the various investigatory committees and the subsequent Freedom of Information Act as amended in February of 1975, the general public had virtually no access to information gathered and secured by the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Over the years that agency has been charged with the responsibility of maintaining surveillance within the United States. Many critics of the bureau have charged that in fulfilling that task the FBI has prevented the free exchange of ideas to the degree that, "Speakers, teachers, writers, and publications themselves were targets of the FBI's Counterintelligence program." (Winkler, P. 9) Even though much of the FBI's alleged illegal activities were concentrated in the mid-1960's and the student protest movement, recent released documents indicate that the bureau frequently engaged in such surveillance activities during prior times of national unrest and uncertainty.*

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*For example, a biographer of G. Bernard Shaw received tremendous data on the bureau's surveillance of that playwright. Recent files made public by the ACLU indicate the bureau kept the ACLU tightly watched from its (ACLU) inception.

These periods of uncertainty were not confined to one decade. During most of the Twentieth Century history of the United States there have been outspoken critics of the path that our Nation was taking. The most consistent criticism arose during the Great Depression and this period from 1930-1940 was one of trauma, introspection and a feeling of national guilt as Americans sought answers to questions concerning this most devastating occurrence in our history.

The depression brought to the fore a new age in American education as a small but significant group of educational leaders sought changes in the structure of the curriculum in an attempt to ward off any future catastrophies of a like nature. Three of those leaders provided significant impetus to the inquiry of educational purpose. John Dewey, George Counts and Harold Rugg had all feared America's "decline" as early as 1925 and during the depression they probed for answers related to the causes of that depression.

The three, Dewey, Counts and Rugg advocated to varying degrees, the involvement of youth in the search for solutions to problems besetting this nation. In American Life and The School Curriculum, Rugg (1941) underscored the model of an educational program in which the entire community can be involved. The "School of Living" was one which would lead in determining and promoting social change. Rugg's popular social science series stressed studying the community, young citizen involvement with that community and constant reminder of the interdependence of people, towns, cities and nations in solving world problems.

In Dewey's words, "The sense of unsolved social problems is all about us... Unless education prepares future citizens to deal effectively with these great questions, our civilization may collapse" (Dewey, 1931). During this period Counts authored his classic monograph, Dare the Schools Build a New Social Order? in which he examined the needed changes in American society and the role of the school in fostering those changes.

There can be little doubt that these advocates for reform in education were espousing a radical,* and to a great degree, psycologically threatening departure from the previously tried and true traditional approaches. Such advocacies brought attention from pressure and special interest groups who advocated particular points of view and who were not generally able to comprehend the concepts to which progressives addressed themselves. Consequnetly the period 1930-1940 was one of serious repression of academic freedom as evidenced by Beale's book Are American Teachers Free (1936) and the Seventh Yearbook of the National Council for the Social Studies entitled Education Against Propaganda (1937).

On December 11, 1940, the National Association of Manufacturers announced the formation of a committee"...to abstract all textbooks in the field of history, civics, sociology, and economics in general use in the public schools of the country." (Social Education, 1941) In its announcement the NAM presented a three-point program designed to"...aid manufacturers in every community to cooperate with their local educational authorities in seeing that the fundamental principle of our republic can find expression within the local school system. (Social Education, 1941)

The NAM abstracts (the "Robey Report," 1941) of social studies textbooks spurred special interest groups on to more vigorous attacks on schools. One victim of such assaults were the textbooks authored by Harold Rugg.

Rugg's textbook series which audaciously presented pertinent and controversial problems of the times such as economic situations, labor management relations, the distribution of wealth, and accounts of Russian changes in economy and lifestyles were the most popular series in the United States for over ten years reaching as may as five million youngsters during the depression.

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*radical in its classical sense - i.e., departure

The war years, however, changed attitudes and feelings and Rugg's books came under nationwide attack for their questioning of so-called basic American values. It was against this background that Rugg's books came under more popular attack. For years the American Legion and other patriotic groups had sought the ouster of the Rugg books from schools, but only with the addition of the wealthy business groups were those attempts finally successful.

Rugg's books were strongly defended by many school people and university professors (even those who disliked Rugg) on the basis of academic freedom. Counts and Dewey strongly supported Rugg's position and they too, were accused of Communism, socialism and Anti-Americanism in the wake of "My Country, right or wrong" fever that swept the Nation. Amidst this background, the Federal Bureau of Investigation was quietly (and in some instances, blatantly) gathering information on these educators. The intent of the authors' research was to determine how the government, represented by the FBI, regarded Dewey, Counts and Rugg and what, if anything, they did to influence popular feeling towards these educators.

After a thirteen month wait the FBI released their files on Dewey, Counts and Rugg to the authors. Nearly 400 pages of information on the three educators had been gathered. This consists of reports by the Bureau, other agencies and private groups, letters, and articles. Interestingly there is very little chronological overlap among the three individual files. The material gathered on Dewey centered primarily on his work with The People's Lobby which Dewey served as president. This material is mostly from the 1930's. Materials was not gathered on Counts until the late 1940's and then only because of his support of the American Civil Liberties Union and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. This latter support, and subsequent file were not started until 1963 when Counts was

74 years old. This type of paranoiac fear is more a reflection of the insecurity of FBI Director Hoover than of the involvement of George Counts in the NAACP.

Rugg's file with the Bureau was begun in 1942 and reflected the national interest in the controversy over the Rugg social studies materials. Material was continually gathered and reports filed on Rugg almost until his death in 1960 at the age of 74.

The earliest official contact with John Dewey by the Bureau occurred in early 1930 and was precipitated by Dewey's active involvement with a liberal public advocacy group. Dewey became president of the People's Lobby, a watchdog organization dedicated to the principles of good government and public disclosure.

A request for information on Dewey which came through Bureau channels prompted a cursory examination of Dewey's involvement in the People's Lobby. An agent was sent to the Washington offices of the People's Lobby where he procured literature (free pamphlets and sample newsletters) and noted the contents of a hallway bulletin board (listing of names of those occupying the offices of the Lobby and "did not list John Dewey"). The material gathered by the agent was compiled in the form of eight "exhibits."

Exhibit 1: Public letter distributed by John Dewey with names of members of the "advisory committee."

Exhibit 2: pamphlet of support for the Peoples Lobby by leading Progressives.

Exhibit 3: (deleted by the Bureau report)

Exhibit 4: pamphlet entitled "Reasons for Direct Federal Child Relief"

Exhibit 5: envelope for returning contribution

Exhibit 6: explanation and form to use in sending contribution

Exhibit 7: copies of various clippings - American newspapers (two were from papers of "foreign tongue") which focused on the People's Lobby and speeches by Dewey.

Exhibit 8: pamphlet entitled "What Right Have We to Control Haiti and Nicaragua" and "How Can We End that Control?"

Apparently representatives of several businesses (or organizations) were interviewed "under pretext" and provided no additional information". . . other than recalling that the mineographed letters of the People's Lobby had been received at their respective offices and promptly destroyed."

Other related information was included in the 1930 investigation but was blanked out by the Bureau and the authors can only speculate that other individuals were interviewed with little or no information of any consequence recorded.

The initial investigation is important for two reasons. It illustrates the methodology utilized by the Bureau in gathering data; usually a cursory examination of information readily available. This initial investigation might be labelled as a "feeling out" process whereby the Bureau was collecting data which might or might not lead to other items of interest. Apparently the Bureau did not uncover anything of any magnitude for another examination of Dewey was not conducted officially for ten years.

The second reason of importance in the initial Bureau investigation is directly related to the first: the idea of collecting anything and everything with no clear objectives in mind to be maintained in a file and added to from time to time.

Dewey or someone else associated with the People's Lobby, may have been aware of the Bureau's inquiries as several copies of the People's Lobby Bulletin were sent directly to Mr. Hoover along with an invitation, in 1934, to attend a People's Lobby Conference on "American Public Ownership Program." There is

no inidcation in the files that a Bureau representative did attend.

The most serious investigation of John Dewey by the Bureau was conducted in 1943 and took the form of a "Custodial detention-C Investigation." At that time (the classification is no longer used by the Bureau), the custodial detention consisted of a thorough search of files and collection of all relevant data. As the Bureau report indicates, "the investigation was predicated upon the fact that the files of the New York Office reflected that Dewey was affiliated with numerous organizations." The twenty-one organizations referred to consisted for the most part of liberal, humanitarium causes.

The investigation was initiated within the Bureau to identify any Communist affiliations held by Dewey. The file was contained in the "Subversive Control" section of the Bureau.

Through file information and interviews, the Bureau set out to conduct a fairly thorough investigation. One source of information was The New Leader, a weekly social democrat publication in New York City which was strongly anti-communist. In interviews conducted by the Bureau with several members of the executive staff, it was stated strongly that Dewey was not a communist nor even necessarily sympathetic to the Communist cause. At issue here was the Bureau's interest in an organization, The New School for Social Research of which Dewey was a prominent member. The Bureau was convinced that the organization was a front for Communist activities and Dewey's association with the School for Social Research made him a prime suspect. Besides the interviews conducted with members of the executive staff of The New Leader, the Bureau received several reports from undercover informants in their employ. Each of the informants reported on different aspects of Dewey's life and activities. One informant advised that Dewey was a member of The National Committee of the Civil Rights Defense Committee, a group organized to aid the followers of Trotsky tried for sedition in Minneapolis. Since the Communist Party had opposed the defendents,

the informant compiled a list of Dewey's involvement with various groups, causes and organizations beginning with the early 1920's.

Yet another informant advised the Bureau of Dewey's then current whereabouts, his apartment rental fees, family life, and the results of an interview with his landlord. The Bureau learned for example, that Dewey resided at two different locations in New York City and paid between $2800 and $3200 per year rental for ar eight room apartment for one residence prior to 1938 (or 1939). Further, the landlord of Dewey's partment informed the Bureau that Dewey's rent was $150 per month for another eight room apartment and ". . . apparently does nothing but write."

The Bureau compiled biographical information on Dewey from 20th Century Authors (ed. by Kenitz and Haycroft) and recorded a description of Dewey:

Age:	83
Born:	October 20, 1859, Burlington, Vermont
Address:	1 West 89th Street, New York City
Build:	Tall and thin
Eyes:	Black
Hair:	Carelessly combed gray hair
Appearance:	Disheveled attire
Manner:	Retiring, mild manner, gentlemanly
Glasses:	Wears spectacles
Speech:	Monotonous drawl
Moustache:	Drooping moustache

The Bureau also classified Dewey's writings as "numerous, involved and complicated. . . . Reading him is a task. . . ."

The Bureau concluded its investigation with the following statement:

> Because of the subject's advanced age and the fact that there is no indication that he is presently engaged in any activity which would be considered inimical to the best interests of the internal security of this country, no further investigation is being conducted and this case is being considered closed.

In 1957, five years after John Dewey's death, the Director of the Federal Bureau, for unexplained reasons, requested, "Let me have a summary on John Dewey, the educator who furthered the idea of progressive education."

Besides contianing a rehashing of earlier investigations, the 1957

investigation revealed that The New Leader in a special publication (October 22, 1949) devoted a section to John Dewey, commemorating his 90th birthday. Among the series of articles (dutifully noted by the Bureau with titles, authors and page numbers) was a section containing letters of greeting he had received. The Bureau noted that one such congratulatory letter received by Dewey was from President Harry Truman. No Bureau comment was added and the file was closed.

It is interesting to note the aspects of Dewey's life which the Bureau decided to include in his dossier and offer some speculation about the Bureau's rationale for regarding Dewey as a possible subversive.

In 1922 Dewey was associated with the Rand School of Social Sciences in New York City. While the Bureau never investigated the school itself, the reports make note of the fact the Rand School was a Socialist School and was . . . "permitted to operate during litigation commenced to effect its closing." The Bureau was apparently interested in anyone associated with the liberal socialist movement.

Two years later in 1924, Dewey received an invitation from the widow of Nicolai Lenin to go to Russia as an Educational Advisor of the Government. Dewey proceded to Russia and as the Bureau duly noted in 1929, ". . . Dewey was connected with numerous organizations which were pro-Russian in Character." Dewey's ties with Russia were indeed close as he was a Member of the Educational Delegation of the American Society for Cultural Relations with Russia (according to Bureau reports this group was organized in Moscow and partially controlled by the Foreign Kommissariat Committee of the Soviet Union Trade Bureau). He was also named as a member of the American Medical Aid for the Soviet Russia Society. Dewey was a member of the National Council Executive Committee of the Foreign Policy Association which had as its purpose, ". . . a liberal and constructive American Foreign Policy."

Of particular interest was an item reported to the Bureau in 1929 which

may have triggered the Bureau's January, 1930 investigation. In a pamphlet intitled "Matthew Woll Takes Issue With Professor John Dewey," Woll who was Vice-president of the American Federation of Labor stated:

> As an example of the propaganda efficience of this body (U.S.S.R., the Soviet Government), I am reliably informed that one of the Soviet Agents directly connected with the organization has openly said that Professor Dewey is doing more for the Soviet cause than all of the avowed Communists the country has ever sheltered or produced.

Even though Mr. Woll denied the statement (the Bureau does not indicate the context in which the denial was made or to whom), he did raise the question of whether Dewey's speeches on the Soviet Schools were not favorable to the Soviet Regime.

Between 1930 and 1943 Dewey became a member of some 21 organizations regarding in varying degrees by the Bureau as having subversive potential. While none of the organizations was even placed on the Bureau's list of active, known Communist or subversive fronts, they apparently were considered somewhat threatening. Dewey's increased membership coupled with his outspoken viewpoints served to bring the Bureau's light of suspicion on him. It is important to note that in every instance of contact by an informant with a Dewey associate, Dewey was regarded as anti-communist but very liberal in his views. The file was closed in 1943 when the investigation failed to disclose any communist affiliation on the part of Dewey.

The 1957 investigation is a puzzlement as no explanation is offered by the Bureau concerning why Dewey's file was reopened five years after his death. Of interest is the fact that the final investigation (actually a summary) was initiated by Hoover himself and little was provided in addition to the 1943 investigation.

One can only speculate that Mr. Hoover wanted to examine the Dewey file in the pursuit of a related matter in which Dewey's file might provide a clue.

In summary, there is little question that Dewey was regarded with

suspicion by the Bureau. In spite of reported notes by informants attesting to his anti-communist attitudes the Bureau persisted in continuing a file on him. In the Bureau's eyes, Dewey walked a thin line between covert and overt foreign sympathies. In either case Dewey, from the Bureau's point of view, was viewed as a subversive and information was gathered continuously from 1930 through 1957 with periodic reviews of the data.

In contrast to the material gathered on Dewey, information accumulated by the Bureau on Rugg and Counts reflects incipient McCarthyism rather than the fears of worldwide depression.

Harold Rugg's file begins in 1942 and contains initially the reprints of articles by some of Rugg's most determined enemies -- George Sokolsky of the National Association of Manufactures; Augustin Rudd, a business executive active in the American Legion and a reprint from an arch conservative magazine called The Beacon Light published by a group in California. The Bureau did not begin this file on its own but obtained the material "gratuitously" from a private citizen. One can only speculate who that might have been since the FBI has eliminated most references to people in their various reports. The material gathered is full of the half truths that marked the attacks on Rugg's books. Some of the derogatory remarks reflect much more on the times than they do on Rugg e.g., Rugg is accused of trying to make students "extreme internationalists, if not communist minded." In an era of new isolation, an internationalist was almost synonomous with communist.

Other Rugg sins are being a member of the "Citizens' Committee of One Hundred" formed by the American Civil Liberties Union for "the purpose of getting disloyal school teachers reinstated by the School Board of New York" (FBI files) and the elimination of history, geography and civics as separate studies and their replacement by social studies. Indeed this was one act that solidified Rugg's posture as anti-American, according to many critics.

Despite collecting this information the FBI went no further at that time and they seemed to have had no direct hand in any of the Rugg textbook removals around the country.

In July 1951 Rugg, who had recently retired from Teachers College, was invited to speak at the annual Boyd Bode Educational Conference at Ohio State University in Columbus. Rugg's speech was concerned with the same ideas Rugg has espoused over the years -- social reconstruction for a better world community. He spoke out strongly on the restraint of academic freedom but these topics alone were not sufficient enough to arouse real controversy. What did arouse many people apparently was that Harold Rugg was saying them again.

Many of the critics of Rugg in the 1940's had obviously hated Rugg -- not just politically but personally. Following the Rugg controversies of the early 1940's, Rugg's texts were removed from many school shelves and sales plummeted to such a degree that Ginn and Company, the publisher halted publication. This victory over Rugg's textbooks was viewed by many of his critics as a triumph over Harold Rugg and "anti-Americanism" ideas. Thus, Rugg's failure to totally disappear from the social scene angered these so-called patriotic Americans once again. This time, however, the specter of McCarthyism was on their side and they were able to convince the FBI that Rugg was a threat to security. This again reflects more on the times than on Rugg since he was in 1951 a 65 year old emeritus professor saying essentially the same things that he had been saying publicly for over twenty years.

Rugg's appearance on campus triggered action on a number of different fronts. First, at the University where the investigation of his appearance was undertaken; second at the state level where the Ohio Un-American activities committee investigated and third within the FBI which began investigating Harold Rugg under a Security Matter - C (Communist) classification.

This latter action began in October of 1951 with a memorandum to J. Edgar Hoover from the Chief of Security Affairs in The Cincinnati Office of the FBI on the subject of Dr. Harold O. Rugg. In this memo, Rugg's appearance at Ohio State was said to have stimulated a number of letters to the editors of Columbus, Ohio newspapers critical of the University for allowing Rugg's appearance. The memo states, however, that "This office conducted no investigation and made no inquiry concerning Dr. Rugg's appearance at OSU..." The memo then went on to summarize a report from the Counterintelligence Corps Detachment at Columbus. This report quotes from letters sent to the editors of the Columbus papers in which Rugg is attacked, not for what he said in his speech, but for what he had said in his writings in the 1930's and 1940's. The letters reopen many of the old sores that only a dedicated Rugg-hater could have or would have dredged up. The existence of Rugg's textbook series is the first of these topics but not far behind were the old accusations that Rugg was a Socialist and that "our country is not a land of opportunity for all" is a statement worthy of investigation.

A few letter writers saw Rugg's speech on campus as not covered by the concept of free speech. "The officials of Ohio State University should not confuse the meaning of free speech and should interpret into action a reasonable amount of fair play. It is not fair to take my money to pay the expenses of him who would use the auspices to hurt me. That is exactly what was done when Harold G. (sic) Rugg was brought to OSU..."

Some letters focused on "the power of a certain group of fuzzy-minded individuals...to bring such a person onto this campus."

Following Rugg's speech (on July 17), Ohio Governor Frank J. Lausche asked Ohio State University trustees to "check into" Rugg's appearance on campus. The day before two members of the state's Un-American Activities Committee said that Rugg's conference would be investigated.

Rugg's appearance was defended in a circular sent out by the leader of the Franklin County Section of the Communist Party calling for liberal professors to defend the right of all ideas to be heard on campus. Rugg did not want or need these friends.

On September 4, 1951, the Board of Trustees of Ohio State stated that "in order to avoid a reoccurence of such an incident, all speakers in the future would have to be cleared through the office of the president of the university."

Sent to the FBI office in August were a number of anti-Communist and anti-Rugg pamphlets by a DAR member who had not forgotten the fear of the 40's. Included was an American Legion pamphlet calling Rugg, Harold G. Rugg. It is interesting to note that nowhere else has Rugg's initial ever been seen as "G" yet a number of the letters to the editors of Columbus papers refer to Harold G. Rugg!

This might have been the end of the FBI files on Rugg but in 1953 the New York Security Affairs Chief, apparently acting on the 1951 Cincinnati memo made a request to Director Hoover to conduct a preliminary investigation of Rugg to determine whether he should be included in the security index. Two weeks later authorization was granted and the investigators were to "be guided by instructions set forth in Section 87C of the Manual of Instructions relating to investigations of teachers." From that point until Rugg's death in 1960, he was under sporadic investigation.

The first report was filed on October 27, 1953 and came from the Boston field office. Rugg's education had been scrutinized from high school through his doctoral work. His transcripts and his alumni file were also examined by the bureau. The latter was similar to the data printed in Who's Who and this file was seemingly the most useful resource for the investigating team. It included letters, clippings and news releases concerning Rugg's travels, writing and honors.

A month later the New York office filed a report that included bits of information on Rugg gathered from informants (often of "unknown reliability"). Some of the information is wrong, some only half true and some, usually the most innocuous was true. Simple data like Rugg's marriages, the years, his children's names and where he gave a speech are in error. One addition to the New York report is a section called Communist Party Fronts. One supposedly was the New York State Chapter of the Progressive Citizens of America of which Rugg was listed as one of nineteen vice-presidents. The list, incidentally was in the possession of the Youth for Wallace (that's Henry, not George!) organization described as "under the influence of the Communist Party." Rugg is also described as being "associated with" the International Judicial Association (IJA) which has ties with the National Lawyers Guild. The IJA according to the Congressional Committee on Un-American Activities report of September 21, 1950 was "an organization which actively defended Communists and consistently followed the Communist Party line."

(It should be reiterated at this time that 1953 was the height of Senator Joe McCarthy's reign of terror and the FBI, despite knowing the inaccuracy of many of the Senators accusations, gladly "played along.")

In a miscellaneous file of Rugg's New York report he is also cited for "his lack of morals'," as well as his supposed sympathy for communism. Some hysterical people had briefly emerged to spew total untruths. E.g., A woman wrote a letter to J. Edgar Hoover on September 7, 1951 "in which she advised that she had known 'red professors at Columbia.' She further declared 'I heard Harold Rugg at a mass meeting of teachers in Horace Mann auditorium, some years ago tell the group that under the Communist regime, every teacher in the United States would get at least five thousand dollars.'"

The report then focused on selected speeches and writings of Rugg, particularly the Ohio State address. Other attacks had come from Hearst

papers and the aforementioned New York State Economic Council, headed by Marvin K. Hart. Another of Rugg's great sins was the mentioning and the quoting of Karl Marx!

Rugg's concern with economic problems were seen as very suspicious and his defense of fired teachers and "Congressional Inquisitions" was seen as a great threat. It should be noted that Rugg was basically not political. He was for social justice and fair play and came out in defense of those concepts, not political doctrines.

The conclusion of the report concerns leads to follow. The New York office planned to do three things, 1) wait for further information from field offices, 2) conduct a further investigation of Rugg in the Woodstock, New York area, 3) contact people familiar with Communist activities in the New York City area and attempt to receive Rugg's voter registration for 1943 to 1948.

In February of 1954, a new report was filed with little new information but additional "old" information not previously in the FBI files but which focused on the 1940's charges against Rugg and his textbooks.

Rugg was also now being labeled a Communist by the common 50's technique, guilt by association. Many of the comments gathered from informants were similar to those of three informants of "known reliability, and familiar with general Communist activities in the New York City area." The advised "in November, 1953, that they did not know the subject and could furnish no information pertaining to the subject."

The file notes that Rugg was to go to Puerto Rico to conduct an educational survey for the Puerto Rican government and the agents were going to check to see if Rugg actually went there.

A month later after ascertaining that Rugg was indeed in Puerto Rico, a request was made to interview Rugg there "to determine the subject's current

attitude toward the Communist Party and any other Communist activities, and to determine if he has knowledge that any of his associates are active in Communism. In addition, it will be determined if the subject will cooperate with the United States government by furnishing the names of persons whom the subject possibly knows are active in Communism.

Permission was granted and on May 7, 1954, Rugg was interviewed in Rio Piedras, Puerto Rico. Rugg stated that he was not a Communist, had never been one and knew of no associates who were either active or interested in Communism. One important statement that Rugg made was repeated often to the authors by Rugg's widow, Elizabeth Rugg Pettet, viz. "He has opposed the membership in social or political organizations by the members of the teaching profession because he feels that such membership affects the objective reasoning which is necessary in the teaching profession."

The agents recommend that Rugg not be placed on the Security Index of their Division of the FBI by the New York Division. They disagreed and in June of 1954 a recommendation was made that a Security Index Card be prepared on Rugg because he was a Communist.

In July, JAJ (or J. Edgar Hoover) rejected the recommendation because of insufficient information to warrant such a recommendation. The New York office was advised to "remain alert to report any additional information indicating subject's affiliation with the Communist Party or Communist front organizations..."

Three other reports were filed on Rugg in 1959, the last coming six months before his death in 1960 but no further action seemed to come of these reports.

The case of George Counts is perhaps the saddest among the three. Counts was the most radical and most outspoken in his defense of so-called Communist ideals. Counts, unlike Rugg, saw social reconstruction as a political act and Counts was very political indeed. He was a union organizer serving as the

first president of the AFT, a staunch defender of civil rights, fluent in Russian and a visitor to the Societ Union. One thing that makes Counts' case so sad is his almost total disavowal of all of these things during the fear-plagued 1950's. Rugg and Dewey stuck to their views, interpretations and principles despite obvious intimidations. Counts finally "caved-in" and his case illustrates the type of destruction the FBI, in conjunction with other government personnel could cause to an individual.

The Bureau first investigated Counts in the 1940's, although his most virulent "socialist" writings were in the 1930's. The first report on Counts originated in New York where he was a professor at (Teachers College, Columbia University). This 1943 report noted that Counts' recent book America, Russia and the Communist Party "shows pro-Russian sympathy but anit-Communist feeling." The report comments that it is being made because Counts "has been a member of or (is) affiliated with approximately fifteen front organizations." These included the American Federation of Teachers (President), American Friends of the Chinese People, American Students Union, National Committee for Defense of Political Prisoners, National Committee for People's Rights, People's Committee Against Hearst (of American League Against War and Fascism), People's Lobby, Union for Democratic Action, American Russian Institute, American Civil Liberties Union, Workers Defense League (Treasurer), et.al. But, in 1942, Counts had come out strongly fro seating AFT members from locals with Communist sympathies.

During the 30's, however, Counts was a close friend of the Soviet Union and of many Communists though he wrote in The Prospectus of American Democracy (1938) that the U.S. could successfully provide a better plan of government that is neither Communist or Fascist. As mentioned above, despite these acts, it appears that no file on Counts was started until 1942.

The conslusion of the report of April, 1943, was that Counts was "not

sympathetic to the Communist cause. For this reason, no further investigation is being contemplated in this office, and this case is being considered closed."

Another report was seemingly filed in 1945 from New York (reference is made to it) but it is not contained in the released documents. In November of 1946, however, a lengthy report on Counts was again made. Reference is made to the Daily Worker attacking Counts but the Bureau saw this emanating out of factional differences and referred to Counts as a member of New Trotskyites.

In December of 1940, according to this FBI report, Counts "had conspicuously remained silent while twenty-one members of his own local (527 of the AFT), faced dismissal at Brooklyn College due to the activities of the (Rapp-Coudert) Committee." It was this type of action (or inaction) that caused Harold Rugg to lose much respect for Counts. As mentioned before Rugg was reasonably consistent in what he supported and generally that was justice. This may sound sophomoric but Rugg was neither politically motivated or concerned. Counts, on the other hand, was far more militant. Often his views were similar to Rugg's, but usually they moved more toward political action. Rugg was markedly disappointed (according to Rugg's widow) when Counts failed to support social justice. Instead Counts, in Rugg's view, placed anti-Communist feeling before such justice.

By 1942, Counts was very active in anti-Communist organizations but his guilt by association with "front organizations" in the 1930's made him still suspect, even after FBI reports that seemed to "exonerate" him. A 1947 report on the International Film Foundation mentions George Counts as "identified with Communist Front organizations."

By 1948, the Bureau, though still suspicious seemed ready to concede that Counts was indeed not a Communist but as Treasurer of the Workers Defense League was involved with an organization HUAC (or HCUA) had cited as a Socialist

organization.

In 1950, Counts was contacted by the New York office of the bureau in its investigation of another alleged Communist and Counts was the subject of as much scrutiny, it seems, as that accorded the individual being investigated.

In March of 1951, a particularly damaging report was added to Counts' file. A former European Communist was interviewed in Paris in January of 1951. This person was describing a Communist party member known as a "member at large." In the course of this description he gave an example of such a member as "an important Columbia University professor, whose name was KOUNTZ or COUNTZ (phonetic)." This person stated that "It was important that such an individual be not identified as a Communist Party member. Therefore, ...his actual membership might be hidden...(and he) should not be known as a Communist." This informant added that "he met KOUNTZ in 1934...at which time he told (the informant) that he was a Communist Part member." The agent making the report concluded that the person mentioned was obviously George Sylvester Counts....

This information caused a new investigation into the Communistic tendencies of George Counts, an investigation that stretched through December of 1951 and which proved totally inconclusive of anything relating to Counts.

In early 1952, 19 citations were placed against Counts by the House Un-American Activities Committee for Communist learnings, based on his writings in the 1930's. Not long after that, in talks at the University of Pittsburgh and Carnegie Institute of Technology, he reputdiated his earlier advocacy for revolution and Soviet Communism. The FBI file includes the Pittsburgh Press account of Counts' talks. (These were gathered not by the Bureau but by the Rev. W. O. H. Garman, vice-president of The American Council of Christian Churches and sent to J. Edgar Hoover.) Counts explained that he wished to see Russia and the Allies joined in the 1930's "as the best deterrent to Hi tler's ambitions."

Garman subsequently wrote letters of protest to the two universities and to John S. Wood, Chairman of the House Un-American Activities Committee. In the latter note, he repeated Counts' transgressions as cited by that Committee and added some others such as favoring and approving "the use of the infamous Rugg textbooks all emanating from Columbia University, and which the Legion and other patriotic organizations were successful in having removed from 1300 school systems." Teachers College is also mentioned and charged with "having taught the teachers Socialism for thirty years."

Garman went on to "tattle" on Professor Thomas because he totally "refused to accept as evidence the findings of the Un-American Activities Committee, which committee he belittled and spoke of most disrespectfully." The conclusion of Garman's letter does note the attacks Counts made on Communism but Garman asserted that Counts was now trying "to teach Socialism to the youth of the land." The new focus of Garman's wrath was a series of UNESCO textbooks published by Teachers College. In letters to the Presidents of Pitt, Carnegie Tech., Director Hoover, Congressmen J. T. Wood, J. S. Wood, and Senator Genner he cites these texts as an attempt to use "the classrooms of the Nation to teach Socialism."

In June, the Bureau received a request from the Americanism Department of the General Federation of Women's Clubs which asked the Bureau to send to them "whatever you have available to organizations on Dr. George S. Counts." Within a week an office memo within the Bureau acted favorably on this request which was <u>totally</u> outside the government. The reasons stated were "In view of our past favorable relations with (this woman) and the organization which she represents, it is felt that you may desire to contact her telephonically and give her any public source material which we have available." The memo goes on to list such data including the unproven statements of the former Conintern agent given in Paris in 1951.

In December, 1955, a short but significant memo appears ir Counts files. The assistant Chief of Staff of the Army in perusing Counts' file for some reason noted that the ACLU had been listed as a "front organization" in the April 1943 report on Counts. The Colonel asked for the accuracy of this Bureau's files, including the aforementioned report, concerning Counts it has not been possible to determine the basis for the reporting agent including captioned organization (ACLU) in this list."

Counts' file seems dormant for over two years until he was made a member of the Committee of 100, NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. At that point he became a source of interest under the "Communist Infiltration of the NAACP, Internal Security-C" file. This file summed up in 43 points every seemingly subversive act Counts had "engaged in" from 1927 to 1957 and included sketches of eight organizations that Counts had been associated with. This investigation resurfaced in 1963 out of the Philadelphia office when Counts was then a resident of New Hope, Pa. With no additional information to be found on Counts, his file seems to have been closed, though not officially. This last report was October 15, 1963 and Counts died in November of 1974. For the last eleven years of his life it appears he finally had escaped the shroud of FBI surveillance.

Probably the most dismaying conclusions that this research has indicated is the ofttimes capriciousness used by the bureau in starting files, in reacting to requests, in releasing seemingly confidential data and in maintaining surveillance in the face of almost universal denials of wrongdoing. This caprice has even extended to the release of documents under the Freedom of Information Act - e.g., in Counts files there are far fewer deletions of Bureau "bigwig's" names than in Rugg's. In the Rugg files names are even deleted from newspaper clippings! Overall the pattern of deletions and release of data is one of no pattern. Indeed, the Bureau in our estimation appears as

a reactor to minor transgressions rather than a well informed body prepared to initiate surveillance. It is not our desire to see the Bureau act this way. Rather that is the picture that the Bureau seems to paint of itself and, in our estimation it is a shame, at least in part.

There are many gaps in the released files and we hope to fill those gaps with documents that have been withheld inexplicably. We also hope to check the sources cited in these files for accuracy in the hope of further monitoring this type of governmental surveillance.

Overall, we were astounded at the interest shown in these three educators at various points in time. Indeed, much of the data collection is more a reflection of the times than of the Bureau, itself. Nevertheless, it is our hope that by being alert to potential governmental interference in academic freedom, we can more fully exercise that freedom in all the schools of our country.